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## UNITED BULGARIA.

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IN the spring of 1876 there was a feeble attempt at insurrection in two or three Bulgarian villages, which, as every one will remember, was put down by the Turks with massacres and burnings such as had not been known for nearly forty years.\* Owing to the remoteness of this region, it was some time before any knowledge of these events reached Western Europe. Detailed information had, however, been received by the American missionaries, and by other Americans engaged in educational work at Constantinople. They endeavored to represent the state of affairs in Bulgaria to the English Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliott, who declined to listen to their statements or to report the facts to his government. Finally, after the London "Times" had refused to publish a cautious report on the subject from its correspondent, Mr. Gallenga, a letter from Constantinople embodying the main facts was published in the "Daily News."† As the truth of these statements was denied by the English embassy at Constantinople, the American gentlemen in question were in danger of losing credit, and, what was more serious, of having Robert College—the most praiseworthy American institution in the East—shut up by the Turkish authorities on the ground of their dissemination of false reports against the government. Under these circumstances the American Minister, Mr. Maynard, deputed me, although I had arrived in Constantinople only a few days before, to proceed to the interior of Bulgaria, and to ascertain, if possible, the exact truth of the case. Meanwhile, such was the excitement which even the first publication had caused in England, that the British Ambassador was instructed to send some one to Philippopolis for the same

\* In 1841, M. Blanqui was sent by M. Guizot to study the results of a similar massacre in Bulgaria.

† Written by Mr. Edwin Pears, an eminent English lawyer.

purpose. Mr. Walter Baring, one of the Secretaries of Legation, who was appointed to that duty, reached Philippopolis at about the same time as myself, and although our lines of investigation were in the main independent, we arrived at substantially the same result as to facts. Mr. J. A. MacGahan, then correspondent of the London "Daily News," was going to the Serbian frontier to write about the Serbian war with Turkey. He happened to go on the same railway train with me as far as Philippopolis, and, remaining there a day, became so interested in what he heard that he decided to put off his journey for a while and write of what he saw. It is chiefly through his letters that the English and the American public became aware of the manner in which the Turks had suppressed the disorders. As there was every reason for conducting my inquiries openly, Mr. MacGahan, Mr. Carl Schneider, the correspondent of the "Cologne Gazette," and, indeed, all who chose were allowed to be present. Two interpreters, of different nationalities, each speaking several languages, secured us against possible deceit. My preliminary report was given out for publication from the Legation during my absence and without my knowledge.

It is unnecessary to recite now the story of what had already taken place or to tell of the horrors which still remained visible. Suffice it to say that the truth of the statements made by the American clergymen was abundantly proven. The state of the country, however, was then so unsettled—there was such abject fear on the part of the Christian population and such organized terrorism on the part of the Mussulmans, with so great carelessness and inefficiency on the part of the officials—that it was impossible to resist the desire to do what we could to bring about a better state of things. The prisons were filled with persons accused of political offenses, who were being tried in batches before a commission composed of Mussulmans without regard to the ordinary forms of procedure; sentences of the most severe nature were given daily, and frequent executions were taking place. The Christian inhabitants were afraid to appear outside of their villages or to continue their agricultural labors; their cattle and horses had been stolen by their Mussulman neighbors, and their crops were not infrequently destroyed. What we could do in the way of representation to the local authorities or to the pashas was done, and in nearly all cases this produced an effect. The English

commissioner could indeed threaten in extreme cases with the displeasure of his government, but all that it was possible for me to do was to represent that the Porte was sincerely desirous of restoring order, and that by maintaining things in their actual position the officials were rendering a disservice to their own Government. In extreme cases it became necessary to obtain the good offices of the American Minister, as well as of the Russian Ambassador, with the authorities at Constantinople. I judged it better to communicate with my Minister by sending him open telegrams, stating exactly the facts, and what was best to do, in order that the Turkish authorities, who read every telegram before it was delivered, might have the advantage of complying with any request before it was actually made. I have every reason to believe that it was owing to the representations made by British and Russian Embassies and by the American Legation to the Porte that the greater number of the untried political prisoners were released, that a new judicial commission was formed, and that about two hundred people already sentenced to death had their sentences commuted. Horses and oxen as well as agricultural implements were restored, and at the end of our six weeks' work the condition of the population was vastly superior to that in which we found it.

I fully admit that, so far as I was concerned, I was, in so acting, going beyond and outside of my instructions ; but it was a case where it was impossible for any man with human feelings to have done differently, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that my conduct was approved and supported both by the Minister at Constantinople and the government at home. I was even afterward thanked by Turkish officials for preventing them from acting so as to lose their places.

The result of the official reports of Mr. Baring, of Prince Tser-ebelef, the Russian consul-general at Philippopolis, who accompanied me during a portion of my investigation, and of the other consuls, was that a conference of European powers finally met in Constantinople in the autumn in order to consider some scheme for the better government of the Bulgarian provinces.

Before the meeting of the Conference, however, General Ignatief came to see me, and said that he was convinced that the Conference could do nothing unless some plan or scheme was placed before them at the beginning for their consideration ; that they

would be too much hurried to work out any measure for the organization of Bulgaria. He suggested, therefore, that, as a person tolerably well acquainted with the present situation of the Bulgarian people, I should co-operate with Prince Tserebelef and another of his secretaries in preparing some scheme of government which could be submitted to the Conference for the approbation of the powers. As Mr. Maynard, the American Minister, saw no objection to my giving my advice and co-operation, we prepared first a plan of a constitution in general terms, which was submitted to Prince Gortchakoff before the Conference met. This having been approved by the prince, we then proceeded to draft a constitution in detail. The work was divided pretty equally between us, although we consulted together on every article. Others who had special knowledge were called in to assist us, including two *attachés* of the Russian consulate-general at Constantinople, who had lived for some time in various parts of Bulgaria and Macedonia, and Mr. MacGahan, who had won the confidence of all who knew him. Mr. Baring, the English secretary, was also invited to assist, but Sir Henry Elliott refused to allow him to give any aid, and kept him at Philippopolis. It was of course impossible for foreigners, even had they known the country much better than we did, to have drawn up a constitution thoroughly suited to the needs of the inhabitants; but we were enabled in the end to draft a scheme which we thought would be acceptable to the powers and at the same time be capable of working fairly well. In some respects I was even less liberal than my Russian colleagues, for, taking into consideration the relative civilization of the country, I laid great stress on the introduction of local self-government, while diminishing the power of the general legislature. The chief officials still had to be appointed or confirmed by the Sultan. But we believed that the country could only learn to govern itself by beginning at the bottom and practicing self-government in the communes on the basis that had always existed, leaving to the future the possibility of giving more extended powers to the provincial assembly.

A question at once arose about the boundaries of the new State; and here it was necessary to obtain assistance from Turkish official documents, especially from those which we considered the most accurate—the reports to the Minister of Finance—so far as they could be obtained. Kiepert's map and the reports of travelers

were taken for what they were worth. Before coming to any decision, an ethnological map of each district was made by Mr. Ternoff of the Russian consulate, together with a carefully prepared collection of vital statistics. There were several questions to be considered. In certain parts of what was evidently Bulgaria were large bodies of Mussulmans, some of them Turks, others Circassians, transplanted there after the Crimean war on the advice of the English embassy; and in some districts people called Pomaks, of Bulgarian origin, and speaking almost solely the Bulgarian language, but who had adopted the Mussulman religion at the time of the Turkish conquest for the sake of preserving their lands and personal freedom. It was of course impossible, in drawing the boundaries of a province, to leave small *encloves*, no matter what their population might be. It was known, for instance, that the village of Peristera was purely Greek, as was also that of Stenimakho, with its surroundings, which was even mentioned as a purely Greek town by Villehardouin after the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204. In the towns on the Black Sea there was a numerical preponderance of Greeks, and there was also a Greek population extending for some miles inland on the sea-coast of the *Ægean*. It was considered necessary to give the future Bulgarian seaports both on the Black Sea and on the *Ægean*; otherwise the same mistake would have been committed which was made by giving the Dalmatian sea-coast to Austria, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a similar population, were thus cut off from their natural outlets.

Expecting that the Conference, and especially its English members, would be exceedingly critical, the boundaries were made rather too large than too small in order to allow room for cutting down. The question then came up, Shall Bulgaria constitute a single province? General Ignatief believed that the English would be unwilling to agree to a single province of the size suggested, and therefore proposed dividing it into two by the line of the Balkans. To this I replied that, if the English objected to a single province, it would be better to allow them the privilege of dividing the country into two, as thus there might be more yielding with regard to other parts of the constitution. My suggestion was accepted, and the constitution was presented to the Conference, giving one great Bulgaria with the constitution which we had agreed upon. Naturally the Conference objected, as we had

foreseen, to many of the articles, and referred the whole back to the Russian delegates for revision. It was evident that, with all the subjects before the Conference for consideration, no great attention could be given to details, and the constitution was sent back arranged in a different order, written in somewhat different language, but with almost every detail substantially the same. This was accepted by the majority. The only serious change was in the boundaries. Here, as we had thought, the English insisted on two provinces instead of one; but, strangely enough, instead of dividing by the natural lines of the mountain range, the provinces were separated by a purely artificial north and south meridian line, which left nearly all the intelligence, culture, and business elements in the eastern province, and the wilder and less civilized part in the western half. It was evident that such a state of things could not have lasted long; and two provinces, while imposing greater burdens upon the population than one, would give far more opportunity for intrigue to any foreign power that chose to adopt such means. Everything, however, was cut short by the refusal of Turkey to accept the results of the Conference. In this she was assisted by an intrigue of the English embassy. Lord Salisbury sustained the side of the Bulgarians, but his colleague, the English Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliott, was jealous of him, and succeeded, owing to his influence and long residence at Constantinople, in persuading the Turks that the real England would support them in any opposition they might make to Russia. Had the proposition of the Conference been accepted by Turkey, the state of affairs would have greatly differed from what it is now. Bulgaria, whether in two provinces or one, would have been immediately subject to the Porte, although with local autonomy; *i. e.*, would have been in the same position in which Eastern Rumelia has been up to the present time. Both Roumania and Serbia would have remained tributary states, and not have become independent kingdoms.

But the Conference, as we have seen, proved abortive, and the result was war, in which the Turks came to such straits that they were willing to accept almost any terms that Russia proposed. Among these was the creation of a great Bulgaria as one single tributary state, with boundaries somewhat enlarged beyond those proposed by the Conference. It was a great grief to those of us who are not Russians, but who are interested in the Christian peo-

ples of the East, and it was, it seems to me, a great mistake on the part of the Russian negotiators that provision was not made for giving Thessaly and Epirus, if not the town of Salonica, to Greece. But as Greece had been led by English promises to keep quiet, and as, more than that, the short-sighted policy of the Greek patriarchate at Constantinople had been, first, to hinder the formation of the Bulgarian exarchate and the separation of the Bulgarian church from the Greek, and then to claim the whole of Bulgaria, which they called by the ancient name Thrace, as Greek on account of its religion, the Russian negotiators were not inclined to interfere in favor of the Greeks.

It may be allowable to say here, parenthetically, that the signature of the peace of San Stefano was first publicly announced at my house to General Grant, who was then in Constantinople, by Count Cortis, the Italian Ambassador, who had just received a telegram to that effect from General Ignatief. The English embassy did not receive the intelligence until the next morning, when it was already published in the newspapers. General Grant was very much interested in the Eastern question in all its details. He had acquired his knowledge with wonderful rapidity during his journey in the East, and, in spite of his taciturnity, had entertained us for an hour the day previous by telling us what he would have done had he arrived before Constantinople at the head of a victorious army. Without entering into details I may say that he would have occupied Constantinople with his troops, and, while making every provision for the safety of private and of governmental property, would have issued a proclamation leaving the ultimate arrangements to the European powers on one sole condition—"that the rule of the Turk in Europe was to be forever abolished."

While the treaty of San Stefano kept very closely to the boundaries of Bulgaria as laid down by the Conference, there was one change of great importance ; for, instead of being a self-governing Turkish province, Bulgaria was constituted into an autonomous tributary principality with a Christian government and a national militia.

As is well known, this diminution of the territory of European Turkey was distasteful to the English Government as well as to Austria, and a congress of the European powers which had signed the treaty of Paris was called at Berlin for the purpose of revising



the treaty of San Stefano. The result of this revision was to reduce very greatly the limits of Bulgaria, by cutting off the whole of Macedonia, by limiting the boundaries on the south-eastern side, and, further, by dividing the country into two parts by the line of the Balkans. The north-western portion was formed into an autonomous tributary principality under the name of Bulgaria, while the south-eastern part was made a province under a Christian governor, with a constitutional government, and placed back under the control of the Porte. Lest there should even seem to be a connection between these two regions, this province was given not the name of Southern Bulgaria, but the misnomer of Eastern Rumelia. In this way that part of the country which had suffered least from the Turks, where the population was sparser and rougher, was given a practical independence, while Eastern Rumelia with a denser, more intelligent, more educated, and richer population, which had been the scene of nearly all the massacres of 1876, was made again a Turkish province. The country was thus burdened with a double government, and the tribute from Eastern Rumelia was fixed at a high rate.\*

In accordance with the terms of the treaty of Berlin, a constitutional assembly met at Tirnovo in the spring of 1879, formed a constitution, and elected as prince, Alexander of Battenberg, the son of Prince Alexander of Hesse, and therefore a cousin of the present Emperor of Russia. The draft of the constitution proposed by Prince Tcherkosky, the Russian governor, was by no means adopted in its entirety. The Bulgarian delegates showed themselves more independent than had been expected, and, partly under the influence of an American gentleman, the late Mr. E. M. Grant, introduced many exceedingly democratic features, in part to the advantage and in part also to the detriment of the country. The constitution as adopted was, as events proved, too liberal for a people not yet accustomed to self-government. Still, as a whole, it worked much better than even the most sanguine friends of Bulgaria had a right to expect. But its defects led the prince to accept the advice of the foreigners who surrounded him, among whom the German consul was especially active, and in 1881 he was induced to issue a proclamation suspending the constitution for seven years, and assuming extraordinary powers for that time.

\* The revenue of the province was estimated at \$3,680,000 (it is really about \$2,760,000), and the tribute was fixed at \$1,104,000.

His action was indeed ratified by a vote of a special assembly elected for that purpose, but the chief political men of the country declared at that time and afterwards that the elections to this assembly had not been free. However that may be, the prince before long saw his mistake, and being loyal to the best interests of the country, gave up the extraordinary powers that had been conferred upon him, and in 1883 restored the constitution with some very slight changes. Since that time, in spite of some checks, the condition of Bulgaria has been uniformly prosperous. Public order has been generally maintained everywhere, agriculture and commerce have prospered, the schools have increased, and the people lead a free and independent life. One sure evidence of the general good government is that the peasantry are constantly adding to their landed property, and that the area of cultivation has been greatly extended.

In accordance also with the provisions of the treaty of Berlin, a European commission met at Philippopolis (the British members were Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and Lord Donoughmore) and a constitution or "organic statute" for Eastern Rumelia was adopted and put into force. The first governor-general appointed by the Porte, with the approval of the powers, was Prince Alexander Vogorides, by origin a Bulgarian, though of Greek education, who had been for many years in the Turkish diplomatic service under the name of Alako Pasha. On the expiration of his term of office in May, 1884, as some of the great powers objected to his renomination, he was succeeded by Gabriel Pasha Chrestovitch, also a Bulgarian by birth. The Rumelians had advantages over the Bulgarians—that their constitution had been more carefully elaborated with a view to the actual conditions and needs of the country, and that they had a more educated class of men willing to serve as functionaries without having recourse to foreigners, as was the case in Bulgaria.

It would seem that constitutional government in Rumelia worked better than in Bulgaria; but there has always been great discontent, arising partly from the interference of the Porte, the non-approval of certain laws passed by the assembly, and the heavy tribute, and partly from a natural sympathy which led the inhabitants to desire union with their brothers across the line. It was felt that a double government imposed heavier burdens on the two provinces taken as a whole than would have been caused by a

single government, and the custom's frontier prevented free trade between the members of what was practically a single people. The custom-houses were all the more disagreeable because they had not existed when both provinces were directly subject to Turkey. These in themselves were grievances, and every one at all acquainted with the situation of affairs saw that sooner or later the two provinces must become united, whether the Turks and the European powers were willing or not.

But in addition to this there was a feeling of sympathy for the Bulgarian inhabitants of Macedonia. It had been promised that liberal institutions should be introduced into Macedonia by the Porte, and the bases of them were even agreed upon with the European powers. These institutions, however, have never been applied by the Porte. Not only has the old system of Turkish government been continued in Macedonia, but rumored intrigues of Austria, if not of other powers, have led the Bulgarians to believe that the fate of their compatriots in Macedonia might be permanently dis severed from their own. It is impossible to consider Macedonia as a single ethnical region. The population of the northern part is Serbian, that of the extreme west Albanian, while the Greek element extends to some distance from the seaboard. The remainder, with the exception of the Turks, who are scattered here and there, is purely Bulgarian. So long as Bulgaria and Rumelia remained separated it was felt that if Austria should advance, as had been frequently rumored, to Salonica, the Bulgarians of Macedonia would be permanently separated from those of Bulgaria and Rumelia. The claims of Greece to a certain portion of this region are clear and well worthy of consideration, but their discussion does not enter into the present subject.

Owing then to the pressure of all these considerations, the inhabitants of Rumelia peaceably arose on the 18th of September, but deposed the chief officials, and proclaimed their union with Bulgaria.

This union is a manifest infraction of the treaty of Berlin, but it is not an infraction of the same kind as though one of the signatory powers of that treaty did some act contrary to its stipulations. Before that treaty was signed Rumania and Serbia had, *de facto*, obtained their independence, and that independence had been acknowledged by Turkey in the treaty of San Stefano, which had been duly ratified. The Porte had even sent ministers to Bucharest

and Belgrade previously to the signature of the treaty of Berlin. As neither Rumelia nor Serbia were allowed to be represented at Berlin and did not sign the treaty, the servitudes imposed upon them by the powers had no moral binding effect upon those countries, but were imposed only by the law of the strongest, and could be made effectual only by force or a threat of force. Such servitudes—and the treaty of Berlin abounds in them—were the provisions by which Serbia was compelled to make a commercial treaty with Austria-Hungary, and by which it was obliged to build a railway to connect the Austrian lines with Constantinople and Salonica. Similar servitudes were imposed upon Roumania with regard to the navigation of the Danube and the treatment of Jews. In like way Rumelia had been recognized by Turkey as part of the autonomous principality of Bulgaria, and its subsequent *status* as a Turkish province was only brought about by the will of the great powers of Europe, contrary to the desire of the population. In uniting itself, therefore, to Bulgaria, Rumelia cannot be accused of a breach of any treaty stipulations, for it signed no treaty; but only of an offense against a rule laid down by the Great Powers, who thought that the situation which they created was absolutely necessary for their essentially selfish interests. It remains therefore to be seen how far the great powers will insist upon the continuance of a situation which they created in view of the supposed necessities of the year 1878. A similar state of things was enacted by the treaty of Paris of 1856, by which, or rather by a conference of the powers in 1858, under the terms of this treaty, Wallachia and Moldavia were made separate principalities, and their request for union was denied. Subsequently, indeed the very next year, 1859, they practically united themselves by electing the same man, Prince Cuza, as hospodar. In view of the accomplished fact, the powers refused to interfere, as the Porte had requested, sanctioned the double election, and subsequently permitted the union of the two principalities into the single principality of Roumania.

EUGENE SCHUYLER.